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ABSTRACT

The Reading/K-5 Language Arts Program of the Des Moines (Iowa) Independent Community School District is directed by its mission statement to provide a quality educational program to a diverse community of students where all are expected to learn. In 1996-97, the elementary instructional materials selection committee studied students' achievement and teachers' instructional practices to establish criteria for selection of an elementary reading program. Instructional time allotted to Reading/K-5 Language Arts ranges from 38% in kindergarten to 45% in fifth grade. The Reading Is Fundamental program is supported by federal and local matching funds. The supervisor's 1996-97 goal is to provide leadership in selecting and implementing a comprehensive elementary reading/language arts program that facilitates instruction and promotes student growth in reading and writing. Supervisor activity from 1993-94 to the present documents over 500 visits to schools and over 300 in-services for teachers, parents, and administrators. The primary strength of the program is its committed and competent teachers. The deficiency of the program is the documented achievement gap between students qualifying for free/reduced lunch and those who do not. The supervisor will continue to support literacy growth by implementing the recently recommended elementary reading instructional materials adoption, and encouraging the use of exemplary instructional methods from the Reading Recovery program. The following needs will guide the program's direction: (1) identify assessment practices and instructional methods that address young children's needs; (2) seek funding for and coordinate staff development; and (3) provide intensive reading instruction for student identified for service. (Contains numerous tables of data.) (RS)

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READING/K-5 LANGUAGE ARTS

PROGRAM EVALUATION
1996-1997

Judy Schneebeck and John F. Tompkins

Division of Teaching and Learning
Des Moines Independent Community School District
Des Moines, Iowa 50309-3399

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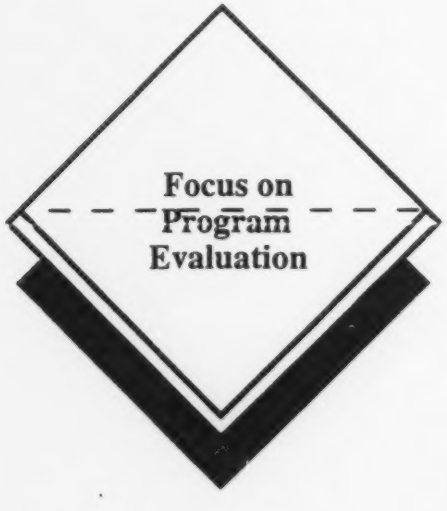

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Reading/K-5 Language Arts

Evaluation Abstract

CONTEXT EVALUATION

The Reading/K-5 Language Arts Program is directed by the district mission, "...to provide a quality educational program to a diverse community of students where all are expected to learn."

In 1996-97, the elementary instructional materials selection committee studied students' achievement and teachers' instructional practices to establish criteria for selection of an elementary reading program. The committee's goals were to select a program that supported a wide range of student need for literacy learning, provided flexible and comprehensive resources for teachers, and was compatible with best practice and current efforts in special programs.

The history of Reading/K-5 Language Arts instruction places current decision-making and student achievement in proper perspective and documents the evolution of reading instruction in elementary, middle, and high schools.

INPUT EVALUATION

The Reading/K-5 Language Arts Program is supported by the General Fund. The most important resources are elementary reading/language arts and middle school reading teachers. Instructional materials adoptions and the work of instructional materials selection committees provide tools and direction for instruction.

Instructional time allotted to Reading/K-5 Language Arts currently ranges from 38% in kindergarten to 45% in fifth grade. Sixth and seventh grade students are required to take reading one period each day for two semesters. Eighth grade reading is optional by district policy but is offered or required in eight middle schools. Over the past four years, an average of 36% of eighth graders were enrolled in reading.

The Reading Is Fundamental (RIF) program is supported by $27,912 in federal funds and $9,304 in local matching funds. Thirty-one schools participated in 1996-97, the 20th year of the program in Des Moines. Over 190 volunteers participated in the 1995-96 program.

The Reading/K-5 Language Arts Program has no budget for staff development.

PROCESS EVALUATION

The supervisor's 1996-97 goal is to provide leadership in selecting and implementing a comprehensive elementary reading/language arts program that facilitates instruction and promotes student growth in reading and writing. This goal supports two target areas of the 1996-97 District Improvement Plan and areas for improvement named by forty elementary and middle schools.

Supervisor activity from 1993-94 to the present documents over 500 visits to schools and over 300 in-services for teachers, parents, and administrators. In cooperation with the Supervisor of Foreign Language/6-12 Language Arts, the supervisor secured funding for and coordinated four Iowa Writing Project (IWP) institutes for teachers.

Integrated technology software to support instruction and learning has been recommended for adoption by both elementary spelling and reading instructional materials selection committees.

PRODUCT

From 1993-94 until the present, the supervisor has provided leadership in support of the district mission by managing the selection of elementary handwriting, spelling, and reading/language arts instructional materials, securing and interpreting assessment tools that evaluate diverse student need, and supporting teachers' efforts, through in-service and collaboration, to accelerate students' literacy growth.

The primary strength of the Reading/K-5 Language Arts Program is its committed and competent teachers. The deficiency of the program is the documented achievement gap between students qualifying for free/reduced lunch and those who do not. When instructional level reading data are disaggregated, the differences in achievement levels between females/males, minority/non-minority, and free/reduced and non-free/reduced are minimal. When grade level reading data and composition data are disaggregated, the differences are slight between female/male and significant for the other groups.

The supervisor will continue to support literacy growth by implementing the recently recommended elementary reading instructional materials adoption, encouraging the use of exemplary instructional methods from the Reading Recovery Program, coordinating staff development for teachers, and working with district time allotment, summer school, and technology committees to align resources with student need.

FUTURE PLANNING

The following needs, listed in order of priority, will guide the direction of the Reading/K-5 Language Arts Program. 1. Identify assessment practices and instructional methods that address the needs of young children entering our literacy program, especially those whose experience with print is limited. 2. Seek funding for and coordinate staff development for teachers. 3. Support the efforts of the Special Education Program to provide intensive reading instruction for students identified for service. 4. Implement the recommendations of the Curriculum Management Task Forces.

A copy of the complete report is available upon request from the Department of School Improvement and Employee Relations, Des Moines Independent Community School District, 1800 Grand Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa 50309-3399. Telephone 515/242-7836. All evaluation reports are submitted to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) and Educational Research Service (ERS).

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READING/K-5 LANGUAGE ARTS

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APRIL 1, 1997

DISTRICT MISSION STATEMENT

THE DES MOINES INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT WILL PROVIDE A QUALITY EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM TO A DIVERSE COMMUNITY OF STUDENTS WHERE ALL ARE EXPECTED TO LEARN.

READING INSTRUCTION GOAL

STUDENTS WILL READ, INDEPENDENTLY, INCREASINGLY COMPLEX MATERIALS WITH UNDERSTANDING.

WRITING INSTRUCTION GOAL

STUDENTS WILL WRITE, INDEPENDENTLY, ABOUT INCREASINGLY COMPLEX IDEAS WITH CLARITY.

Beliefs That Guide Instruction

The following statements are excerpts from the philosophies written by instructional materials selection committees. These statements guide instruction in Reading/K-5 Language Arts.

Language Arts, K-5
Writing and reading are the critical components of language arts instruction. The study of handwriting, spelling, grammar, mechanics, and literature enhances students' ability to write with clarity.

Handwriting, K-5
The goal of handwriting instruction is that students will learn to write legibly and fluently in order to communicate effectively.

Spelling, 2-5
The goal of spelling instruction is that students will use correct spelling in writing.

Dictionaries, 2-5
Students will locate correct spelling and expand their vocabulary using the dictionary.

Thesauruses, 2-5
Students will use the thesaurus to expand word use and achieve variety in writing.

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Reading, K-5

The following assumptions guide reading instruction.

- Teachers aim to develop independent readers who assume responsibilities for learning and for improving their reading and writing proficiency each time they are engaged in reading and writing.
- Flexible grouping practices that are based on the on-going assessment of student need for instruction as well as student interest allow the student to grow in reading proficiency.
- Direct reading instruction, focused on students' strengths and needs, is essential to growth toward proficient reading.
- The use of appropriately-leveled and varied reading materials allows students to utilize and apply comprehension strategies.
- Independent literacy activities that are an outgrowth of direct instruction provide opportunities for students to apply skills and strategies.
- Word study related to text fosters decoding skills and vocabulary expansion.
- Writing, an essential tool for practicing related reading strategies and demonstrating comprehension of text, complements reading instruction.
- Teachers model effective reading through reading aloud and shared reading and writing.

Elementary Reading/Language Arts Program Objectives
Instructional Materials Selection Committee, 1997

In order to become proficient readers, students need information about how print works, the structure of language, sound-symbol correspondence (phonics), and word meaning. They also must develop strategies (conscious plans) that they can apply in order to read and understand familiar or unfamiliar text. Our program objectives are a summary of the strategies students need to acquire in order to grow in proficiency. Our unified reading curriculum provides teachers with instructional guidance and tools to help students accomplish the program goal.

Students will

- read a wide variety of materials (including technology) for the purposes of learning, enjoyment and communication.
- select material and read on their own.
- use a variety of strategies to read independently for meaning.
- retell what they have read, orally or in writing, to demonstrate comprehension.
- respond to what they have read, orally, in writing, or through the arts, to show depth of understanding.
- apply what they know (concepts, meaning, language, and phonics) to help them understand new material, from wordless books to chapter books, text genres, and test formats.
- make, confirm, and revise predictions using letters and words, story elements, and text format.
- apply critical thinking strategies to text.
- write for a variety of purposes.
- demonstrate through writing what they understand about how print works (letter/sound, phonics, word patterns, word, sentence, paragraph, story beginning/middle/end).
- use an increasingly complex listening, speaking, reading, and writing vocabulary.
- assess their own reading and writing achievement and progress.
- demonstrate an understanding of increasingly complex sentence structure and organizational format.
- access and apply information.

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CONTEXT EVALUATION

Policies. Standards. and Regulations

National Standards

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

A Congressionally-mandated project. NAEP has measured the scholastic achievement of elementary. middle. and high school students since 1969. The most current report on reading (1994) measured the achievement of students at grades 4. 8. and 12. State by state reading assessments were conducted at grade 4. yielding average reading proficiency scores. Of the four regions. central had the highest average proficiency. Iowa ranked fourth among all the participating jurisdictions. Three literacies were assessed: Reading for Literary Experience. Reading to Gain Information: and Reading to Perform a Task (grades 8 and 11 only).

New Standards Project

New Standards is a collaboration of the Learning Research and Development Center of the University of Pittsburgh and the National Center on Education and the Economy. Performance tasks have been validated in partnership with states and urban school districts. The goal is to measure student progress in science. mathematics, language arts, and applied learning against national standards. The language arts tasks are reading short passages and answering questions. writing first drafts, and editing. The performance tasks are correlated to the National English Language Arts Standards (1996). Students are assessed at grades 4,8. and 10.

National Standards for the English Language Arts

In 1996 the International Reading Association (IRA) and the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) published national standards.

1. Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts. of themselves. and of the cultures of the United States and the world: to acquire new information: to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace: and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction. classic and contemporary works.

2. Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g.. philosophical. ethical. aesthetic) of human experience.

3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend. interpret. evaluate. and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience. their interactions with other readers and writers. their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts. their word identification strategies. and their understanding of textual features (e.g.. sound-letter correspondence. sentence structure. context. graphics).

4. Students adjust their use of spoken. written. and visual language (e.g.. conventions. style. vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.

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5. Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.

6. Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and nonprint texts.

7. Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and nonprint texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.

8. Students use a variety of technological and informational resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.

9. Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles.

10. Students whose first language is not English make use of their first language to develop competency in the English language arts and to develop understanding of content across the curriculum.

11. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.

12. Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

State of Iowa Standards
Guidelines For Interpretation: October, 1988

Kindergarten Program

12.5(2) Kindergarten program shall include experiences designed to develop healthy emotional and social habits; language arts and communication skills; the capacity to complete individual tasks; and the ability to protect and increase physical well-being. A kindergarten teacher shall be certificated to teach in kindergarten. An accredited nonpublic school must meet the requirements of this subrule only if it offers a kindergarten program.

English-Language Arts

12.5(3a) Elementary program, grades 1-6. English-language arts instruction shall include the following communication processes: speaking; listening; reading; writing; viewing; and visual expression and nonverbal communication. Instruction shall incorporate language learning and creative, logical, and critical thinking. The following shall be taught: oral and written composition; communication processes and

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skills, including handwriting and spelling; literature; creative dramatics; and reading.

12.5(4a) Junior high program, grades 7 and 8. English-language arts instruction shall include the following communication processes: speaking; listening; reading; writing; viewing; and visual expression and nonverbal communication. Instruction shall incorporate language learning and creative, logical, and critical thinking. The following shall be taught: oral and written composition; communication processes and skills, including spelling; literature; creative dramatics; and reading.

12.5(5a) High school program, grades 9-12 (6 units). English-language arts instruction shall include the following communication processes: speaking; listening; reading; writing; viewing; and visual expression and nonverbal communication. Instruction shall incorporate language learning and creative, logical, and critical thinking. The program shall encompass communication processes and skills: written composition; speech; debate; American English, and world literature; creative dramatics; and journalism.

Endorsement in Reading
State of Iowa Standards, 1989

The endorsement of teachers of reading is administered at the state level through the Division of Professional & Administrative Support. The following endorsements are required for persons who teach reading as a special subject. Elementary teachers, unless they teach only reading in a departmental setting, are not required to be endorsed.

148 Reading (K-6): If this endorsement is held, the teacher is also endorsed to teach reading in 7th and 8th grades.

149 Reading (7-12): If this endorsement is held, the teacher is also endorsed to teach reading in 5th and 6th grades.

176 Reading specialists (K-12): The holder of this endorsement is authorized to serve as a reading specialist in kindergarten and grades one through twelve.

Three hundred and fifty certified staff hold one or more reading endorsements.

History of Reading/K-5 Language Arts Instruction in the
Des Moines Public Schools
1859-1997

The history of reading instruction in the United States and particularly in the Des Moines Public Schools is informative. Reading instruction history prior to 1890, when the earliest records of textbook purchases are available in Des Moines, encompasses or foreshadows all of the trends displayed in current instructional materials. A brief overview places the years, 1859-1997, in perspective.

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Content, rather than process, was the emphasis in early "readers." The content of the first reading materials used in **colonial** America was religion. The "primer" was so-named not because it is a first book "but because it was primary in containing the minimum essentials deemed necessary for one's spiritual existence." p. 45

Nationalism influenced the content of reading materials during the period from **1776-1840**, and from **1840-1880**, developing an informed citizenry through reading for information was emphasized. With the development of graded schools, grading reading series were introduced. The most notable, the McGuffey readers, used widely (122,000,000 copies were sold) from 1836 to 1920, not only reflected the content of the time, but also provided sentences that illustrated phonetic elements. From **1880-1910**, reading series reflected a growing interest in literature study. "Charles Eliot, then president of Harvard, advocated the abolishment of basal readers and suggested substituting original literary works in their place." p. 48

During the period from **1910-1925** noted educator, William S. Gray, published the Gray Standardized Oral Reading Paragraphs, an early test of silent reading. With such tools, the "scientific" differentiation between poor and proficient readers was facilitated. The discrepancy became a national concern. From **1925-1935**, basal programs had two emphases: mastery of a sequence of skills and reading as thinking. During this period, the preprimer was introduced as readiness for the primer. Also, the three-group method was developed to provide for individual needs. From **1935-1950** the concern about reading deficiency continued. The perceived inability of soldiers to read well enough to fulfill their duties led to developmental reading programs in high schools and colleges. Reading clinics proliferated. And reading readiness books, preceding the preprimers, were introduced. From **1950-1965**, basal programs were developed to include grades 7 and 8. Materials were developed to represent and respect equity in gender and ethnicity. To address grouping and pacing challenges, individualized reading and programmed reading materials were used in schools.

From 1965-1976, "almost all of the approaches (in modern dress) utilized in the United States since 1840 were visible...." p. 56. Perhaps the greatest innovation during this period was "the contribution made by linguistics, psycholinguistics, and sociolinguistics." p. 57. [Robinson, H. Alan. Reading and Writing Instruction in the United States: Historical Trends. Urbana: ERIC/IRA, 1977.]

It is not wise to generalize about trends in the last two decades, **1976-1997**. In the 60s and 70s, two researchers, utilizing the case study approach and observational rather than experimental designs, described the behaviors of proficient readers and writers. The work of Marie Clay in reading (1962-present) and Donald Graves in writing (1973-present) influenced the district's increased emphasis on writing and resulted in the district's inclusion of the Reading Recovery Program in 1991-92. It is important to acknowledge that current concerns, instructional materials, teaching methods, and assessments have their roots in the past. It is even more important, however, to acknowledge that what remains constant over time is teachers' expertise and experience and their commitment to students' needs.

1836-86	McGuffy's Readers, a series of 7 books graduated in difficulty, were the most widely-used textbooks in American classrooms. Oral reading and memory drills were emphasized.
1846-47	First schools established in Des Moines.
1849-50	First school district organized in Des Moines.

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1856-57	First school erected for $8000 in Des Moines.
1859	Board provided a list of books for instruction. Teachers were directed "to concentrate on McGuffey's spellers and readers." p. 11 [Nicholas, Prudence A. "Ten Decades of Learning," speech presented to 1,500 Des Moines and Polk County teachers at the annual teachers' conference at Roosevelt High School, September, 1949.]
1879	Superintendent reports that the danger of memorizing the reading lessons is difficult to avoid "and challenges teachers to give children fresh reading which must be done at sight." p. 13 [Nicholas]
1884-85	Kindergarten established in Des Moines. "Des Moines was the second city in the United States to establish kindergartens in the public schools. St. Louis was the first." p. 12 [Nicholas]
1890s	John Dewey challenged rote learning and drew attention to children as individuals, each of whom learned differently.
1890-97	Use of Appleton's Readers, Barnes New World Readers, Harpers Readers (American Book Company) and Pollard's Readers (Westin Publishing House). First through 5th readers were purchased. They ranged in cost from $ .14 to $ .72 @.
1890-97	Use of Watson's Complete Spellers (American Book Company).
1890-97	Use of Pollard's Spellers (Westin Publishing House).
1900s	Cheaper paper and high-volume printing techniques made it possible for each child to have his or her own reader.
1921-53	Use of Elson Basic Readers (Scott Foresman). Editor, W.S. Gray. This series promoted silent over oral reading, partly in response to a national concern that soldiers in World War I could not follow printed instructions. While various elementary readers were purchased during this period, the most notable were the Elson Basic Readers. The characters, Dick and Jane, first appeared in the 1930 Elson Basic Reader primer. The series utilized the whole-word or "look-say" approach, learning the words that went along with the pictures. Phonics was also part of every lesson. In 1941-42, Fun with Dick and Jane cost $ .48 @. Other readers in the series ranged in price from $ .18 - $ .90.
1921	In a promotional pamphlet accompanying the publishing of the Elson Readers, the author wrote, "Of course [the textbook] cannot supplant the good teacher. The good teacher can get results from a poor textbook or from no textbook at all. But the good teacher who has a good textbook finds her power multiplied." ["A Busy Father in Storybook Land," 1921]
1932-33	Use of Correlated Handwriting Compendium (Freeman), 2nd-5th grades.

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1935-36	Pre-junior readers (Lyons & Carnahan and Scott, Foresman) were purchased for "over-age pupils doing work below the junior high grades but as part of the junior high school in order that they shall be associating with pupils of their own age. These pupils, in almost all cases, are having reading difficulties and the problem is to supply them with a large amount of good reading matter which is not too difficult for their use." Board minutes, September 21, 1937.
1939-40	World Book Encyclopedias, 18 volumes, were purchased. Forty sets at $37.50 @ cost $1500.
1941-42	Use of Spelling, grades 2-6, (Silver Burdett) These books cost $.33 @.
1942-43	Thorndike Century Junior Dictionary, grades 4-6. (Scott, Foresman) These books cost $1.11 @.
1944-45	Use of Reading for Independence (Scott Foresman) Reading materials were purchased to supplement the controlled reading in the basal readers.
1945-46	In her history of Des Moines for school children, Ilda Hammer wrote, "There were 43 elementary schools, five junior high schools, 3 senior high schools, 2 junior-senior high schools, one opportunity school, one developmental school, and one continuation school. [The] enrollment was about 27,000." ...About 328 junior and senior high school teachers, 420 elementary school teachers, 50 kindergarten teachers, and 50 special teachers in the department of pupil adjustment are needed for the city's 27,000 pupils. To keep the buildings warm and clean, about 150 persons are employed." pp. 272-274 [Hammer, Ilda M. The Book of Des Moines. Des Moines: The Board of Education, 1947.]
1948-49	Developmental Reading, Grade 7, Curriculum Guide, approved. "Pupils completing sixth grade cannot be expected to have had need for or use of all reading techniques that should be mastered. Continued specific instruction in specialized classes is an approach that should yield results."
1950s	Nationally, under-prepared teachers were hired to meet the needs of growing school populations after World War II. Teacher's editions were developed as explicit "recipes" for instruction.
1955	Rudolf Flesch's Why Johnny Can't Read a best seller. Flesch criticized the artificial "stories" found in contemporary readers and suggested that a phonics-intensive approach would allow children to read any materials, including the world's great literature.
1957-58	Spelling for Word Mastery (Charles E. Merrill Books) adopted for grade 5.
1957-58	Supplementary readers adopted for grades 2, 3, and 6.
1958	Phonics approach to reading, Keys to Reading (Economy), introduced in seven elementary schools.

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1960s-91	Three Reading Resource Consultant positions, supported by the General Fund, were created with responsibilities for coordinating the reading program in assigned buildings, providing in-service, diagnosing reading difficulties, assisting classroom teachers, and coordinating instructional materials selection committees.
1963-64	Keys to Reading used in all elementary schools.
1965	Final printing of "Dick & Jane" Scott Foresman primers.
1965	Elementary and Secondary Education Act provided substantial budget allocations for education, benefiting reading instruction and research.
1966-67	Added Reading for Meaning, (Houghton-Mifflin), K-5. The title of the primer was "Jack and Janet."
1970s	Sullivan Programmed Reading used in some elementary schools.
1973-74	Approval of 6 elementary "reading systems" from which each school and, in some cases, teachers selected.
1975-89	Management systems adopted to unify the use of multiple basal programs. • Strategies in Early Childhood (WAUPUN) was written in Waupun, WI, and provided a kindergarten screen and activities to promote growth in visual, auditory, verbal, motor, and language areas. • SARI (Systematic Approach to Reading Instruction) management system was implemented to unite the varied reading series, grades 1-8, used in the district. It provided pre and posttests managing 86 objectives, to promote growth in word analysis, phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension. Study skills were not tested. Coordinated worksheets were also developed and provided to schools.
1975-76	Supervisor of Reading position created and filled. A multiplicity of basal programs required coordination, and mobility within the district necessitated a unified reading program.
1975-76	The number of limited English proficient students served by the district was 300.
1977-78	RIF program began at Casady Elementary and Warren Harding Junior High. Approximately 700 students received books of their choice from this federally-funded project.
1978-89	Use of two elementary basal programs, Pathfinder (Allyn & Bacon) and Holt Basic Reading System (Holt).
1978-89	Use of Houghton Mifflin Reading Series, 6-8. (Houghton Mifflin.)

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1980s A developing interest in readability resulted in the student's reading level included on report card, grouping by instructional level in junior highs, and reporting reading scores by instructional reading levels.

1980s Over 60 teachers completed reading certification in classes coordinated by the Supervisor of Reading and Drake University.

1980-88

SARI Grade Level Mastery, 1980-1988
% of Students Mastering Grade Level Reading
≥ 80%

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
1980-81		34	50	54	57
1981-82		43	52	56	56
1982-83		46	55	57	59
1983-84		50	59	61	60
1984-85		52	61	70	63
1986-87	38	47	53	49	48
1987-88	39	52	56	50	47

Students were pre and posttested at grades 1-3. They were often retaught and retested for mastery on the posttest. While students were tested at their instructional reading levels, these data reveal the percentages of students reading independently "on or above grade level."

1981-83 Reading Skills/Reading in the Content Areas high school workshops provided by content-area supervisors.

1982-83 Hiatt reading staff developed a reading strategies guide for content area teachers. The guide was used for in-services.

1980s In the 1980s, greater emphasis was given to elementary children reading whole texts, ultimately raising expectations for readers. This trend had a major influence on curriculum and textbook publishers.

1982-83 Literature Handbook K-8 was developed by Reading Resource Consultants and distributed to promote literature appreciation.

1982-83 High school reading objectives established. Three high school reading teachers were supported by district funds; 4 by Chapter I/II. Courses included Speed and Power Reading, Reading Improvement, Developmental Reading, Contemporary Reading, Individualized Reading, and Reading Lab.

1982-91 Book Pros (Book Professionals). Each year 50 district teachers attended workshops and developed book guides at Heartland. The goal was to provide quality literature instruction as a supplement to the basal reading program.

1983-85 Sixth graders moved to the middle schools.

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1983-87 Eighth Grade Elective: Independent Reading Course developed by Reading Resource Consultants. The one-semester course was designed to meet the needs of 8th grade students reading on or above grade level.

1984-87 Reading Advisory Committee formed, composed of parents, media representatives, university professors, DE representatives, and teachers.

1985-86 32.86 percent of DMPS students qualified for free/reduced lunch.

1985-86 Supervisor of Reading assumes responsibility for K-5 Language Arts.

1985-86 Language Arts Consultant positon, supported by the General Fund, added with responsibility for composition.

1985-89 ITBS Reading Average Percentile Ranks
(National Student Norms)

Norm-referenced tests, such as ITBS, interpret individual performance by comparing a student's score to an established norm group. This type of test is designed so that half of the students score above the 50th percentile and half below. The average percentile rank for district students is reported below for the years 1985-89.

Grade 4

Subtest	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
Vocabulary	55	60	59	58	59
Reading Comprehension	60	62	61	61	62
Language	57	61	64	59	69

Grade 6

Subtest	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
Vocabulary	60	57	61	56	59
Reading Comprehension	55	56	57	55	55

Grade 7

Subtest	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
Vocabulary	55	58	60	57	62
Reading Comprehension	50	58	58	57	60

1986-87 Language Arts Objectives-Based Tests were developed for 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades. The 3rd and 5th grade tests were dropped in the early 90s after the composition tests were established.

1986-87 Composition Network Teams of elementary principals and teachers formed to increase the emphasis on writing.

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1987-88	Fifth grade composition assessment initiated.
1986-89	Reading/Writing Classroom proposal approved resulting in pilots at Wright and Jackson. Experimental groups received reading instruction using trade books, fiction and nonfiction. Control groups received instruction from the basal program. Pre and post assessments (CAT writing samples, and attitude surveys) revealed little difference in effect.
1988-89	Third grade composition assessment initiated.
1989-90	Use of World of Reading (Silver Burdett & Ginn) K-8 and Scope English (Scholastic) 6-8 and over 800 titles of accompanying trade books. The management/assessment system provided longer, more complex passages and a study skills emphasis.
1989-97	Two groups responded to the publicity about the whole language movement. • The general public decried the alleged de-emphasis of phonics instruction. • Reading educators re-affirmed the importance of a balanced literacy approach, including phonics instruction.
1989-91	Portfolio assessment was encouraged. Des Moines teachers took workshops at Heartland and provided in-service for colleagues.
1990-91	Reading Resource and Language Arts Consultants positions eliminated.
1991-92	Four elementary principals co-supervised the Reading/K-5 Language Arts Program, Marie Cardamone, Judi Cunningham, Linda Hansen, Sandy O'Brien.
1991-92	Title I/VI school-wide model implemented at Moulton. This model encouraged Title I/VI reading teachers to serve identified children in the classroom.
1991-92	With the development of natural language texts, highly predictable and engaging, children were able to participate earlier in the act of reading. The Reading Recovery Program, utilizing these texts, influenced the way classroom teachers worked with emerging readers. Reading Recovery, a one-to-one, short term, early intervention program for first graders at risk of not reading normally, was implemented in 6 elementary schools.
1992-93	Supervisor of Reading/K-5 Language Arts position filled.
1992-93	IMSplus computer management system, monitoring math and reading growth, fully implemented in all elementary schools.
1992-93	K-2 Reading/Writing Assessment Committee created an observational checklist for reading and writing and recommended omitting Levels 3 & 4 of 1st grade district reading testing.

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1993-94	K-2 Curriculum Development Committee developed the "Framework for Language Arts Instruction."
1993-97	Six elementary schools (Cattell, Findley, Longfellow, Lucas, Oak Park, Stowe) secured waivers from 1 or more levels of district reading assessments.
1995-96	IMSplus support discontinued by vendor.
1996-97	41.18% of students qualified for free or reduced lunch.
1996-97	Fourth grade Language Arts Objectives-Based Test discontinued.
1996-97	Fifteen of 19 Title I/VI schools use the school-wide model.
1996-97	RIF program grows to 31 elementary and middle schools. In 1995-96 over 10,000 students received at least 3 books of their choice from this federally funded program.
1996-97	RIF program receives a $9,000 grant from the Plumpers Division of Dubuque Foods. These funds permit each of the 31 RIF sites to serve additional grade levels or to add a 4th book distribution in 1997-98.
1996-97	The number of limited English proficient students served at the elementary level is 1,114.
1997-98	Elementary Instructional Materials Selection Committee recommends Literacy Place (Scholastic) to the Board for approval.

Elementary Reading Adoption, 1997

The Instructional Materials Selection Committee was formed in January, 1996. After analyzing a database of all teachers who had served on elementary reading/language arts committees since 1987, the supervisor first selected committee members from previously under-represented schools. In cooperation with elementary principals and DMEA, and in response to requests to serve, she formed a committee of classroom teachers, including representatives of ESL, G&T, Special Education, Title I/VI, Reading Recovery, and ELLI (Early Learning Literacy Initiative) programs. Five parents and 3 community representatives agreed to serve as well as 2 principals and specialists in technology and evaluation.

The committee requested specific examination materials after analyzing the district's diverse community of elementary students.

- ESL/Bilingual 1114 students (7%)
- Gifted/Talented 1590 students (10%)
- Special Education 1591 students (10%)
- Title I/VI 1796 students (12%)

Because 39% percent of our students have special needs, we requested and examined comprehensive reading programs offering a wide range of reading materials and support for all students. Because of the trends in Title I/VI and Special Education to serve students in the

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classroom, the committee was determined to select a unified reading program that could meet the widest variety of need and provide a common, articulated instructional approach for teachers.

The committee studied district student achievement in reading to assess need. While there is a wide range of normal literacy development in young children, we recognized that a literary-rich kindergarten program was a priority, with strong support for first, second, and third grade children an equal need. As one member said, "We need to put little books in little hands."

> "Studies comparing the reading achievement of children at the end of first grade with their achievement in later grades establish that how well children 'catch on' to reading in the first grade strongly predicts how well they will read during the remainder of their school years." (Juel, "Acquisition of literacy: A longitudinal study of children in first and second grade." Journal of Educational Psychology.)

To provide support for teachers as they use a new quality educational program, the committee, drawing from its own expertise, experience, and study, crafted a preliminary curriculum guide with recommendations for organizing instructional time. The guide proposed a balanced literacy program organized around 5 literacy blocks: reading aloud by teacher, guided/direct reading instruction, shared reading, independent reading, and writing.

The Staff Development Department offered Room 126 at Samuelson to house examination materials. The Teaching and Learning Division purchased cabinets for storage. Sue Swartz, Teaching Technology Facilitator, coordinated the project.

In the spring of 1996, the committee surveyed classroom teachers. The purpose of the survey was to gain information on how K-5 teachers were grouping children for reading instruction and the criteria teachers were using to place students into groups. The survey also asked teachers about their use of the current reading materials (basal materials and trade books). Jeri Gustafson, School Improvement and Employee Relations Intern, worked with the supervisor to design and distribute the confidential survey. The survey was returned by 268 teachers (44%). Jeri's analysis follows in italics.

Results of the survey indicate that there is a wide variety of grouping arrangements used across the district for direct and indirect reading instruction. The average K-5 teacher, according to our findings, uses three types of grouping arrangements for direct reading instruction and five types of grouping arrangements for indirect reading instruction. Other findings from the survey include:

- *The most frequently used grouping arrangements at all levels except kindergarten are whole class heterogeneous groups and small homogeneous groups. In kindergarten classrooms, the most frequently used grouping arrangements are whole class heterogeneous groups and small heterogeneous groups.*

- *In comparing grouping arrangements in primary classrooms (K-2) to grouping arrangements used in intermediate classrooms (3-5), there are significant differences in the use of heterogeneous small groups, homogeneous small groups, individualized instruction, cooperative learning groups, groups at centers, literature study groups, and research groups.*

- *At all grade levels, the average number of minutes per week devoted to reading instruction met or exceeded district time allotments for reading.*

- *In comparing the average number of minutes per week spent on direct and indirect reading instruction, kindergarten through 3rd grade classrooms spend more time per week*

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on direct reading instruction while 4th and 5th grade classrooms spend more time per week on indirect reading instruction.

- *The two criteria used most often for placing students into groups for reading instruction are the instructional needs of the students followed by student interest in a topic.*
- *The instructional reading levels (IRL) of the students in a group are an important factor in the selection of reading materials for the group.*
- *The majority of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grade teachers uses a combination of basal materials and trade books for reading instruction. Teachers in 4th and 5th grade use trade books more often than basal materials.*
- *Over 50% of the teachers surveyed were interested in additional ideas for meaningful independent seatwork and information on appropriately-leveled instructional materials.*
- *Approximately 50% of the teachers surveyed requested information on assessing students' instructional needs.*

The survey results led the committee to look for a comprehensive reading program that offered varied instructional materials, strong teacher support, and useful assessment tools.

Toy Kerr, Instructional Technology Facilitator, provided a comparative analysis of the software accompanying the three programs field-tested. Toy's analysis clarified the quality of integration with the teacher and student materials and instructional management capabilities.

In addition to the 270 teachers surveyed, the instructional materials selection committee of 54 was informed by 52 volunteer readers who, along with their students, evaluated the quality of trade books. The committee studied 9 comprehensive programs and measuring them against specific criteria, narrowed their selection to 3 programs. Twenty-two teachers served on the Staff Development/Phase III Development Committee to recommend options for staff development in support of the elementary adoption. Forty-two teachers field-tested the programs under final consideration. Recognizing that individual teachers may have served in more than one capacity, approximately 400 persons contributed to the selection of the recommended program.

Instructional Organization

Elementary Reading/Writing, Grades K-5

Elementary reading/writing instruction is guided by the district mission statement, the State of Iowa Standards, the Elementary Time Allotments, reading/writing instructional objectives, and the philosophies that guided the adoption of curriculum materials. Students are grouped flexibly by reading level for instruction and are tested at their instructional reading level.

Instruction in writing, grades K-2, is included in the time allotted to the K-2 Integrated Units. Writing at this level is viewed both as a tool to enhance reading comprehension and as a process by which students develop clarity in writing. Instruction in writing, grades 3-5, is not integrated with other subject areas. However, all instruction, K-5, assumes that developing writers write most clearly about subjects that relate directly to experience or emerge from their study in other content areas. Writing instruction is directed to what the writer knows and needs to know.

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Reading instruction, K-5, is not integrated with other subject areas. Instruction is directed toward the reading level of the student and uses texts (fiction and nonfiction trade books and basal readers) that students can comprehend with independence.

Middle School Reading, Grades 6-7

Middle school reading instruction is guided by the district mission statement, State of Iowa Standards, district policy requiring students in grades 6 and 7 to take reading 2 semesters for 1 class period, instructional objectives, and the philosophy that guided the adoption of curriculum materials in reading. In 1989 the Reading Adoption Committee recommended that students be grouped heterogeneously for reading instruction and tested on grade level.

In 1996-97, 8 of 10 middle schools used some variety of interdisciplinary teaming.

- Five schools organized reading/English instruction in a two-period block in 6th and/or 7th grades.
- Three schools formed multidisciplinary teams in 6th and 7th grades. In these schools, reading was taught by math, social science, special education, science, ESL, English, and reading teachers.

Two schools offer reading as a separate class.

Middle School Reading, Grade 8

While reading instruction at 8th grade is optional by district policy, 8 of the 10 middle schools offer or require 8th grade reading in 1 of 3 configurations.

- one-semester classes meeting every other day for 1 year.
- one-semester classes meeting every day for 1 semester.
- two-semester classes meeting every day.

In 1978, with the adoption of a middle school basal reading series, 8th grade reading was provided in some middle schools for students reading 1 to 2 years below level. Five years later, several middle schools offered 8th grade independent reading as an elective to students reading on or above level. After the 1989 basal/trade book adoption, most 8th grade reading classes became heterogenously-grouped independent reading classes. While 8 schools offer or require reading, many students are exempted by their attendance at Central Academy or by enrollment in language arts electives. The percent of 8th graders taking reading is reported below.

Year	% Enrolled in Reading
1992-93	48
1993-94	23
1994-95	34
1995-96	39

High School Reading, Grades 9-12

While reading instruction in high school is optional by district policy, Scavo High School and Casady Alternative School emphasize reading/study skills. Classes in Reading Improvement, Survival Reading, and Individualized Reading are offered middle and high school students at Casady Alternative School.

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INPUT EVALUATION

Budget and Sources of Revenue

Elementary reading/language arts teachers and secondary reading teachers are supported by the General Fund. The Textbook Budget and the Curriculum Development/Materials Selection Budget (General Fund) also support the Reading/K-5 Language Arts Program.

Instructional staff expenditures are based on $46.155 (average salary/benefits) multiplied by the percent of time allotted to Reading/K-5 Language Arts instruction.

Human Resource Expenditures (1996-97)

Instructional Staff

Grade	# Full Time Equivalent	% of time teaching Reading/K-5 Language Arts*	Total Salary/ Benefits	Cost Per Student
Kindergarten	71.5	38%	$1.254,031.30	$465.00
1st Grade	117.0	46%	2,484,062.10	935.00
2nd Grade	106.5	47%	2,310,288.50	908.00
3rd Grade	97.5	44%	1,980,049.50	818.00
4th Grade	86.5	45%	1,796,583.30	800.00
5th Grade	77.5	45%	1,609,655.60	677.00
Departmental/ Multiage	49.5	44% (average)	1,005,255.90	--
6th, 7th, 8th	90.0	60% (average)**	1,800,045.00	260.00
		TOTAL	$12,239,971.20	

*The percent of time teaching Reading/K-5 Language Arts, reflects the time allotted to reading, composition, handwriting, spelling, library visits, and literature.

**In 1992-93 there were 69 reading teachers. In 1996-97, there are 90 teachers who instruct 1 or more sections of reading. The salary estimate is based on an adjusted estimate of 65 FTE. The % of time is adjusted to reflect reading instruction in the interdisciplinary team.

Central Office Administration

Supervisor	1.0	$60,270.00
Secretary	.5	9,360.00
TOTAL		$69,630.00

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Staff Development Expenditures

The Reading/K-5 Language Arts program has no budget to support staff development.

Instructional Materials Budget

1996-97	Spelling, 2-5	$210,000

Curriculum Development/Materials Selection Budget

1996-97	Reading, K-8	$19,647

Reading Is Fundamental (RIF)

The RIF program in each school relies on the time and organization of school and community volunteers. Over 196 volunteers (parents, librarians, teachers, and community members) worked with the program in 1995-96. From 1976-1996, participating schools have expended $749,678 (federal/local funds), served 226,478 students, and distributed 653,516 books to students for their personal libraries. Peggy Doane, Secretary, Elementary/Early Childhood Programs and Middle and High School Programs, coordinates the program.

Elementary Time Allotments

Elementary time allotments, established in 1983 and revised in 1989, are currently under study.

Middle School Time Allotment for Reading

All 6th and 7th grade students are required to take reading 2 semesters for 1 class period. An average of 36% of 8th grade students were enrolled in reading from 1992-93 to 1995-96. These students took reading for 1 class period for 1 or 2 semesters.

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Textbooks In Use

	Book Title (Copyright) Publisher	Current Use Cycle	Future Use Cycle	Cost
READING				
K-8	World of Reading (1989) Silver, Burdett & Ginn	1989-1997	1997-2004	$542,820.55
6-8	Scope English (1988) Scholastic	1989-1997	1997-2004	31,227.17
K-8	Trade Books (1989)	1989-1997	1997-2004	250,000.00
K-8	Trade Books (1991)	1989-1997	1997-2004	150,000.00
		TOTAL		$974,047.72
LANGUAGE ARTS				
K-5	HBJ Language (1990) Harcourt Brace Jovanovich	1991-1998	1998-2005	$152,377.00
HANDWRITING				
K-5	Handwriting Connections (1993) McDougal, Littell (Houghton Mifflin)	1994-2001	2001-2008	$84,000.00
DICTIONARIES/THESAURUSES				
2-5	Beginning Dictionary (1997) ScottForesman Intermediate Dictionary (1997) ScottForesman Beginning Writer's Thesaurus (1994) ScottForesman Writer's Thesaurus (1994) ScottForesman Young Writer's Thesaurus (1990) HoughtonMifflin	1996-2003	2003-2010	$110,000.00
SPELLING				
2-5	Spelling (1995) ScottForesman and Co.	1996-2003	2003-2010	$210,000

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PROCESS EVALUATION

1996-97 Goal and Objectives: Supervisor of Reading/K-5 Language Arts

Goal: The Supervisor of Reading/K-5 Language Arts will provide leadership in selecting and implementing a comprehensive elementary reading/language arts program that facilitates instruction and promotes student growth in reading and writing.

Objectives:

1. Meet the organizational expectations of the Teaching and Learning Division by being accessible to building and central office staff.

2. Support the missions of the district and the schools.

3. Facilitate professional growth opportunities for teachers and administrators.

District Improvement Plan

The following target areas in the 1996-97 District Improvement Plan specifically affect the Reading/K-5 Language Arts Program:

1. By the beginning of school year 1999-2000, 80 percent of elementary, middle and high school students will achieve at least 70 percent mastery on district criterion-referenced assessments of mathematics, reading, language arts, social sciences, sciences, foreign languages, and vocational subjects.

2. By the opening of the 1999-2000 school year, 55, 60, 65, and 70 percent of the students in grades 3,5,8, and 11 respectively will achieve the competent standard on the district composition assessment.

3. By 1999, the district will develop comprehensive, community-wide School-to-Work initiatives to prepare all students to enter and succeed in the changing workplace.

School Improvement Plans

In their 1996-97 plans, thirty-one elementary and middle schools named reading as an area for improvement. Nine elementary schools named writing as an area for improvement in their 1996-97 plans.

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Supervisor Activity

1993-94

In 1993-94, the supervisor made over 200 visits to elementary and middle schools. In addition, she provided 104 in-services on varied topics: reading strategies, spelling, tutoring, the Iowa Writing Project grant opportunities, content-area reading, performance assessment, handwriting instruction, and poetry. In-services were provided for teachers, parents, community volunteers, Home Instruction staff/parents, and students. The supervisor joined curriculum directors, professors, teachers, and staff developers from Drake University, Simpson College, and the West Des Moines and Urbandale school districts to plan and facilitate the first Drake Summer Literacy Institute, "Successful Practices in Reading and Writing," featuring Jan Duncan, New Zealand educator. Over 80 Des Moines teachers attended the five-day conference on the balanced literacy program. She also conducted 3 workshops on portfolio assessment, serving 75 teachers. In cooperation with Heartland and funded by the Des Moines National Poetry Festival, she organized 2 half-day poetry workshops for area-teachers.

The supervisor planned and coordinated 14 meetings of the K-5 Handwriting Adoption Committee, 9 meetings of the K-2 Curriculum Development Committee, and guided a committee to revise the elementary spelling program. She coordinated the study and purchase of trade books for emerging and developing readers.

1994-95

In 1994-95, the supervisor made over 139 visits to elementary and middle schools and provided 56 in-services on varied topics: instructional strategies, on-line services, spelling, composition, primary reading assessment waivers, the balanced reading program, acceleration in reading, and the writing workshop. At the invitation of the Supervisor of Mathematics, she provided 54 half-day math/reading workshops for elementary teachers. The math/reading workshops were shortened by a critical substitute shortage; in response, the supervisor organized voluntary grade-level sharing sessions. In addition, she secured a grant to fund 3 Iowa Writing Project Institutes funded by the Roy J. Carver Trust. With area-educators, she co-planned and facilitated the second Drake Summer Literacy Institute featuring writing educator, Jacque Wuertenberg. The conference was attended by over 60 Des Moines teachers.

The supervisor planned and coordinated 18 meetings of the 2-5 Spelling/Dictionaries/ Thesauruses Committee.

1995-96

In 1995-96, the supervisor made over 110 visits to elementary and middle schools and provided over 50 in-services on varied topics. In addition, she served on an Administrative Academy cadre that provided staff development for administrators on Student Achievement. She co-planned and facilitated the third annual Drake Summer Literacy Institute featuring reading educator, Richard Allington. Approximately 100 Des Moines teachers attended. The supervisor served on the Phase III Advisory Council, seeking clarification of the use of Phase III funds for content-area staff development.

The supervisor had 15 meetings with publishers' sales representatives, planned and coordinated 6 meetings of the K-5 Reading Adoption Committee, 5 meetings of the 6-8 Reading Adoption Committee, 8 meetings of the Staff Development/Phase III Reading Committee, and final meetings of the Spelling/Dictionaries/Thesauruses Committee.

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1996-97

As of March 1, 1997, the supervisor made over 40 visits to elementary, middle, and high schools and provided over 40 in-services. In addition, she served on the Curriculum and Evaluation Technology Sub-committee and the Elementary Report Card, Summer School, and Elementary Time Allotment Committees. The decisions of each of these committees directly affect the literacy program. The supervisor planned extensive in-service for elementary teachers on the new reading adoption. Phase III content-area classes, either district or site-based, were planned for all teachers, K-5, in June and August, 1997.

The supervisor had 25 meetings with publishers' sales representatives, planned and coordinated 24 meetings of the K-5 Reading Adoption Committee, and met with the 6-8 Reading Adoption Committee and the Staff Development/Phase III Reading Committee.

The fourth annual Drake Summer Literacy Institute will feature Reading Recovery Trainers, Gay Su Pinnell and Irene Fountas, authors of Guided Reading: Good First Teaching for All Children. Over 100 Des Moines teachers were registered as of February, 1997. The supervisor co-planned and will co-facilitate the conference.

Iowa Writing Project Institutes

The first Iowa Writing Project (IWP) met in 1978 under University of Iowa sponsorship with Dr. Jim Davis as the leader. The rationale for such an institute was based on the assumption that teachers who are active writers are more aware of their student writers' needs. The IWP institute provides time, instruction, and a responsive audience for teachers' writing.

Thousands of Iowa teachers have been involved in IWP since 1978. One summer there were 1400 teachers attending 55 institutes around the state. Des Moines has had 9 IWPs with 214 participants. The IWP institutes have had several funding sources and have been coordinated by the Supervisors of Foreign Language/6-12 Language Arts and Reading/K-5 Language Arts.

In 1994, the district received a Roy J. Carver Foundation grant. It funded three IWP institutes and provided on-line service for several elementary schools.

Year	Institute	# Participants	Funding
1988	IWP - Level I	25	Fund for Excellence
1988	IWP - Level II	25	Fund for Excellence
1989	IWP - Level I	25	Fund for Excellence
1989	IWP - Level II	21	Fund for Excellence
1991	IWP - Level I	25	Meredith Corp. U.S. West Fund for Excellence Des Moines Plan Elementary/Early Childhood Programs Middle/High School Programs
1993	IWP - Level I	25	Elementary/Early Childhood Programs Middle/High School Programs

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1994	IWP - Level I - Hanawalt, Hillis, Jackson, Lucas, Oak Park, Phillips (Grant Schools)	25	Roy J. Carver Foundation Grant
1994	IWP - Level II - Hanawalt, Hillis, Jackson, Lucas, Oak Park, Phillips (Grant Schools)	25	Roy J. Carver Foundation Grant
1995	IWP - Level II - Hanawalt, Hillis, Jackson, Lucas, Oak Park, Phillips (Grant Schools)	18	Roy J. Carver Foundation Grant

Technology

Two instructional materials adoptions have included integrated curriculum software in the Macintosh and Windows platforms:

Elementary Spelling, 1996
Elementary Reading, 1997

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PRODUCT EVALUATION

Contributions to Accomplishment of District Mission

The supervisor's primary responsibility is to support the district mission: *"...to provide a quality educational program to a diverse community of students where all are expected to learn."* She provided leadership in three supporting areas:

- managing the selection of elementary handwriting, spelling, and reading instructional materials
- securing and interpreting assessment tools that evaluate diverse student need
- supporting teachers' efforts, through in-service and collaboration, to accelerate students' literacy growth.

Program Strengths and Deficiency

Strengths

The primary strength of the Reading/K-5 Language Arts Program is its committed and competent teachers. Teachers carefully assess student need, continually revise their instructional strategies, provide opportunities for students to grow, keep parents and students informed of progress, seek professional growth opportunities, and collaborate with colleagues to meet student, building, and district goals. They use information from district assessment tools (tests and alternative assessments) to inform instruction. Many have initiated the use of performance assessment tools (observational checklists, portfolios, running records) to provide opportunities for students to demonstrate their progress. Teachers serve on curriculum committees, teach staff development courses, and provide in-service for their colleagues in and outside the district.

A second strength of the reading/language arts program is its emphasis on flexible grouping and differentiated instruction. Teachers use information from various sources (testing, observation, student work samples) to determine student need. They direct their instruction to students' developmental and instructional needs.

A third strength of the reading/language arts program is its curriculum. The student texts and teacher resource materials were selected to provide quality and flexible tools for instruction.

Deficiency

The achievement gap between students qualifying for free or reduced lunch and those who do not widens as students proceed through the grade levels. Statistically, the factor correlated with lower achievement is income level. We will continue to assess and address the needs of young children entering our literacy program. Children whose experience with print is limited need intensive support compared with children who, according to some reading researchers, have had over 1,000 hours of active reading and writing experiences before they enter school.

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Assessment Overview

District teachers collect and report information about student progress that informs students, parents, principals, support programs (ESL, G&T, Special Education, Title I/VI), the supervisor, the Board of Directors, and our community. The most important use of assessment information is for instructional planning.

Criterion-referenced Tests

The criterion-referenced test yields a measurement of progress on specific skills in terms of a defined level of mastery. The focus is on the performance of a student as measured against the criterion rather than against the performance of others who take the same test. The performance of students on the Silver Burdett & Ginn end-of-level tests in reading at the elementary level provides teachers with information for instructional decision making. The instructional reading level of the student is determined partially by progress measured on the test. The purpose of these tests is reading placement.

Compositon Performance Assessment

A performance assessment calls on students to apply the skills and knowledge they have mastered. It measures a student's ability to perform tasks and solve problems in authentic or "real life" situations. The district performance assessment measures the holistic process of writing. The holistic score represents the reader's overall impression of the paper. This district assessment, administered at grades 3, and 5, 8, and 11, yields holistic and dimensional scores. The dimensions scored are development/organization, language choice, sentence structure, and mechanics. The composition test requires students to write from a choice of three topics. Both the 3rd and 5th grade topics direct students to draft personal narratives that they revise and edit. The primary purposes of this assessment have been selection of students for remedial services and program evaluation. Teachers use their students' scored writing for instructional decision making and student self-evaluation. The assessment criteria (the student score sheet) guide instruction.

Norm-referenced Tests

Norm-referenced tests interpret individual performance by comparing a student's score to an established norm group, not to a performance criterion. The test is designed so that half of the students score above the 50th percentile and half below. The Iowa Tests of Basic Skills is administered in grades 3, 4, 6, and 7. Reading and language arts subtests are presented in a multiple-choice format.

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Elementary Reading, Grades 1-5

Instructional Level Mastery, Levels 5-11

Elementary teachers direct their instruction to the appropriate developmental reading level of the student. Because text difficulty increases as students progress through the instructional reading levels, some students are not able to read grade level texts independently. All students at a given grade level are not instructed at the same reading level, although students read common texts with different levels of support. The data below represent the percent of students correctly responding at ≥70% at varying instructional reading levels. The instructional levels correlate to the following grade levels:

Level 5	Grade 1^2
Levels 6 & 7	Grade 2^1 and 2^2
Levels 8 & 9	Grade 3^1 and 3^2
Level 10	Grade 4
Level 11	Grade 5

	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7	Level 8	Level 9	Level 10	Level 11
1991-92	90.0	77.0	93.0	75.0	90.0	84.0	86.0
1992-93	91.9	78.7	95.3	73.4	89.9	84.1	88.7
1993-94	90.0	77.1	95.3	71.4	88.8	87.2	86.4
1994-95	86.7	77.3	93.7	70.5	89.0	85.2	87.2
1995-96	87.1	84.0	96.0	76.4	91.0	88.3	87.4

The achievement of students who are tested at their instructional reading levels is predictably high. The District Improvement Plan establishes target goals for academic achievement. The target and actual percent of students achieving the district mastery level is displayed below.

Elementary Reading
Percent Achieving ≥ 70% Mastery

Year	Target	Actual
1992-93	65	88.0
1993-94	65	88.0
1994-95	68	86.8
1995-96	71	
1996-97	74	
1997-98	77	
1998-99	80	

When instructional level mastery is compared to the target, the actual percents exceed the target percents.

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Grade Level Mastery, Grades 1-5

While teachers assess and direct instruction to students' developmental reading level, their goal is to accelerate students' progress toward grade level mastery. The data below represent the percent of students correctly responding at ≥70% at their grade level. These students are able to read grade level texts independently. While data has been collected and reported for 5 years, the data below reveal the progress of a similar group of students (those tested on grade level) from 1991-92 in 1st grade to 1995-96 in 5th grade.

Year	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
1991-92	36.8				
1992-93		57.8			
1993-94			62.0		
1994-95				65.5	
1995-96					68.6

There is a wide range of normal reading development among 5 to eight-year-olds, a range suggested by the data. The goal of reading instruction is that students will read increasingly complex materials with understanding; the progress of these students toward that goal is reflected in the data.

Comparative data from 1981-82 to 1984-85, when the percent of students qualifying for free/reduced was less than 32.68%, reported grade level mastery for a similar group of students as they progressed from 2nd to 5th grades. (See p. 10) While the data were calculated at ≥ 80%, there is no evidence of a significant decline in grade level reading mastery from 1985 to 1995.

Year	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
1981-82	43			
1982-83		55		
1983-84			61	
1984-85				63

In 1995-96, the percent of students qualifying for free/reduced lunch was 38.37%. What remains constant over time is teachers' expertise and experience and their commitment to students' needs.

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Disaggregated Grade Level Mastery, Grades 1-5
Males/Females and Minority/Non-Minority

The data below are disaggregated comparing all students tested with males/females and minority/non-minority students. By grade 4, the percent of minority students correctly responding at ≥70% is 9% less than majority students; by grade 5 the gap widens to 15%. The difference between male/female achievement is insignificant.

1995-96	% ≥70% All Students	% ≥70% All Females	% ≥70% All Males	% ≥70% All Minority	% ≥70% All Non-minority
Grade 1	91.1	91.9	90.2	84.1	92.5
# Tested	877	470	407	145	732
Grade 2	97.7	98.0	97.4	94.6	98.4
# Tested	1038	546	492	203	835
Grade 3	94.8	94.8	94.9	94.6	94.9
# Tested	1161	630	531	203	958
Grade 4	91.9	91.6	92.1	84.5	93.4
# Tested	1609	820	789	284	1325
Grade 5	87.6	88.3	86.8	75.0	90.6
# Tested	1537	779	758	296	1241

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Disaggregated Grade Level Mastery, Grades 1-5
Free/Reduced and Non-Free/Reduced

The data below are disaggregated comparing free/reduced qualifying students with non-qualifying students. The differences are slight until grade 4 when the percent of free/reduced qualifying students correctly responding at ≥70% is 8% less than non-qualifying students. By grade 5 the gap widens to 15%. (Free/reduced data were not disaggregated for 1995-96 and are instead reported for 1994-95 in the following table.)

1994-95	% ≥70% Free or Reduced	% ≥70% Non-Free or Reduced
Grade 1	88.3	93.4
# Tested	343	686
Grade 2	95.1	97.2
# Tested	365	744
Grade 3	90.7	94.9
# Tested	462	962
Grade 4	83.5	91.9
# Tested	514	964
Grade 5	77.3	92.1
# Tested	493	978

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ITBS Reading: Elementary School Cohort Growth
Average Percentile Ranks (National Student Norms)

	Vocabulary	Comprehension	Reading Total
Grade 3 (93-94)	54	54	53
Grade 4 (94-95)	48	58	55
Grade 3 (94-95)	51	59	55
Grade 4 (95-96)	53	60	58

Comparative 4th grade data from 1985-86, when the percent of students qualifying for free/reduced lunch was 32.86%, report average percentile ranks of 55 in vocabulary and 60 in reading comprehension. (See p. 11) Although the comparative and current data are from differently normed tests there is no evidence of a significant decline in average proficiency from 1985 to 1995.

Year	Vocabulary	Reading Comprehension
1985	55	60

In 1995-96, the percent of students qualifying for free/reduced lunch was 38.37%. To repeat, what remains constant over time is teachers' expertise and experience and their commitment to students' needs.

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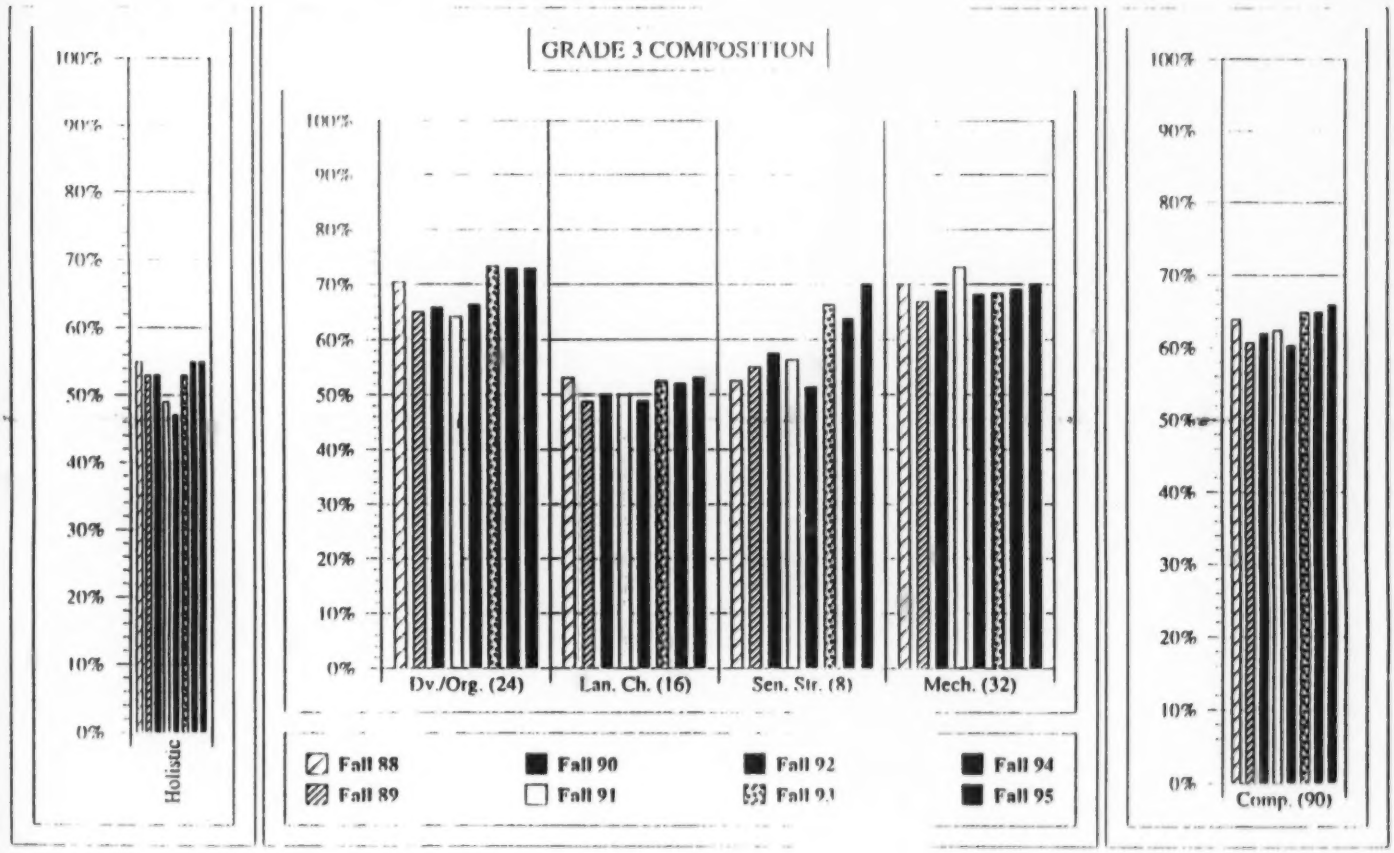
Elementary Writing, Grades 3-5

Grade 3 Composition Performance Assessment



Strand Avg. Raw Scores

	Fall-88	Fall-89	Fall-90	Fall-91	Fall-92	Fall-93	Fall-94	Fall-95
Holistic	5.5	5.3	5.3	4.9	4.7	5.1	5.5	5.5
Development/Organization	16.9	15.6	15.8	15.4	15.9	17.6	17.5	17.5
Language Choice	8.3	7.8	8	8	7.8	8.1	8.3	8.5
Sentence Structure	4.2	4.4	4.6	4.5	4.1	5.3	5.1	5.6
Mechanics	22.4	21.4	22	23.4	21.8	21.9	22.1	22.3
Composite	57.5	54.6	55.7	56.2	54.3	58.1	58.4	59.3

The average raw scores suggest a consistent picture of proficiency over eight years of performance assessment. Third grade students perform predictably in the dimensions reported. As a group, they demonstrate more control over development/organization and mechanics than language choice or sentence structure. There has been an improvement in the dimensions of development/organization and sentence structure over the past three years. The goal of writing instruction is that students will write, independently, about increasingly complex ideas with clarity.

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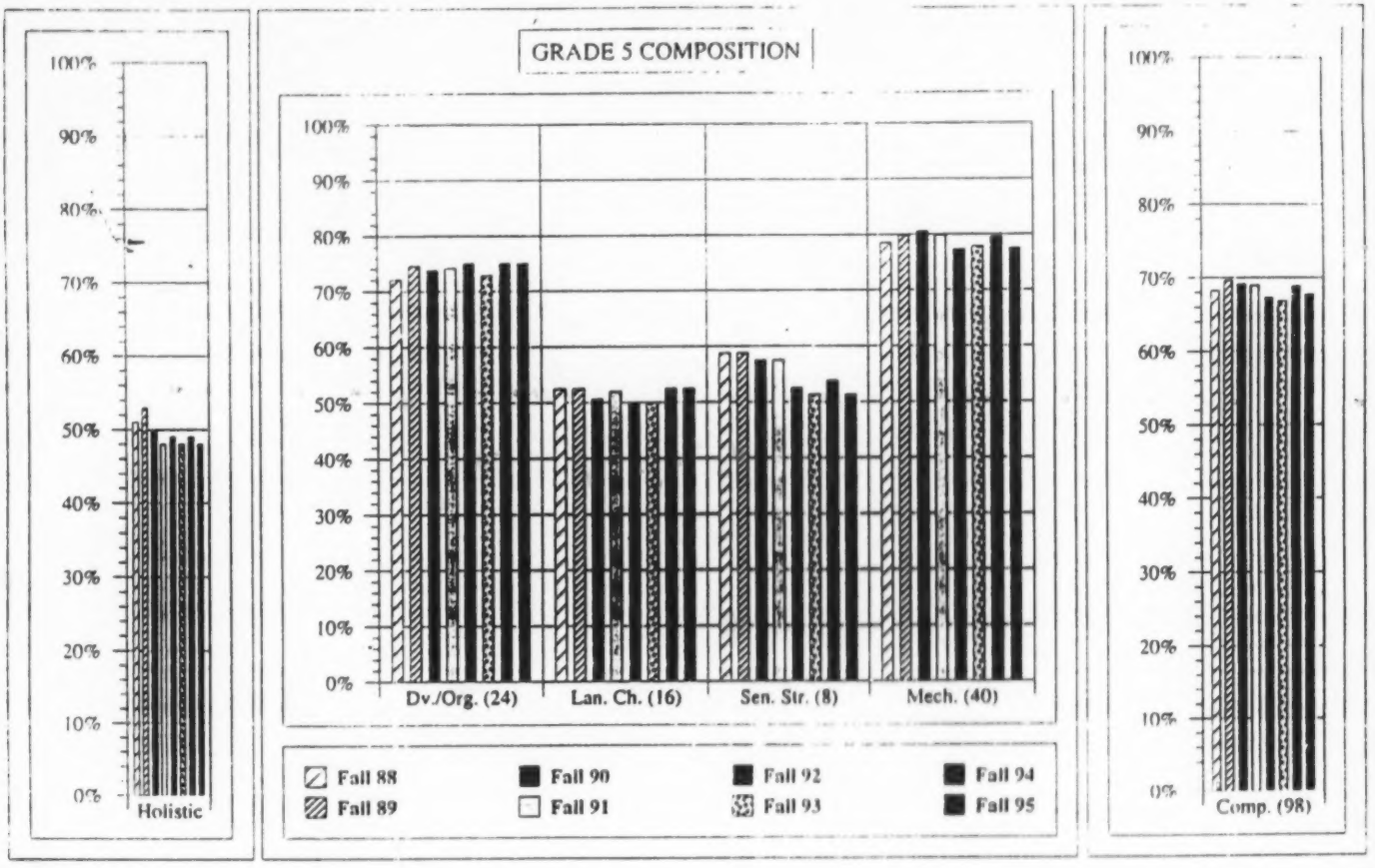
Grade 5 Composition Performance Assessment



Strand Avg. Raw Scores

	Fall-88	Fall-89	Fall-90	Fall-91	Fall-92	Fall-93	Fall-94	Fall-95
Holistic	5.1	5.3	5	4.8	4.9	4.8	4.9	4.8
Development/Organization	17.3	17.9	17.7	17.8	18	17.5	18	18
Language Choice	8.4	8.4	8.1	8.3	8	8	8.4	8.4
Sentence Structure	4.7	4.7	4.6	4.6	4.2	4.1	4.3	4.1
Mechanics	31.4	31.9	32.2	31.9	30.9	31.1	31.8	31
Composite	66.8	68.2	67.7	67.5	66	65.5	67.4	66.3

The average raw scores suggest a consistent picture of proficiency over eight years of performance assessment. Fifth grade students perform predictably in the dimensions reported. As a group, they demonstrate more control over development/organization and mechanics than language choice or sentence structure. While performance across the dimensions has been relatively consistent over the past eight years, average proficiency has declined in sentence structure. As students attempt more complex sentence structures, the risk of error increases. The goal of writing instruction is that students will write, independently, about increasingly complex ideas with clarity.

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Disaggregated Composition: Performance Assessment
Competent Standard, Grades 3 and 5

Grade & Year	All Students	Females	Males	Non-minority Students	Minority Students	Free & Reduced	Non Free & Reduced
Grade 3 1992-93	30.9*	36.8	25.1	33.8	19.2	19.6	39.6
	2305**	1150	1155	1847	458	997	1308
Grade 5 1994-95	37.8	44.0	31.5	41.0	26.4	25.4	46.2
	2062	1038	1024	1619	443	827	1235
Grade 3 1993-94	47.1	57.6	37.1	51.0	32.4	33.8	57.0
	2295	1116	1179	1808	487	980	1315
Grade 5 1995-96	31.5	36.0	27.0	34.7	20.9	N/A	N/A
	2115	1053	1062	1618	497		

*Percent of students achieving the "Competent" standard.
**Number of students tested.

The disaggregated 1995-96 5th grade data reveal a slight gap between females/males and a wider gap between non-minority/minority students achieving the competent standard or higher. The gap between students qualifying for free/reduced and those who do not is significant in 3rd grade (1992-94) and 5th grade (1994-95). Data were not available in 1995-96. The competent standard requires a holistic score of 6 and a dimensional mean of 5; the competent level is higher than an average score.

Percent of Students Achieving Competent Standard
District Composition Assessment

	Grade 3		Grade 5	
	Target	Actual	Target	Actual
1991-92		36.4		34.7
1992-93		30.9		37.2
1993-94		47.1		34.6
1994-95		50.6		37.8
1995-96		51.3		31.5
1996-97	53		40	
1997-98	54		50	
1998-99	55		60	

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ITBS Language: Elementary School Cohort Growth
Average Percentile Ranks (National Student Norms)

	Spelling	Capitalization	Punctuation	Language Total
Grade 3 (93-94)	48	59	63	59
Grade 4 (94-95)	52	67	64	60
Grade 3 (94-95)	52	57	60	59
Grade 4 (95-96)	50	66	65	67

Comparative 4th grade data from 1985-86, when the percent of students qualifying for free/reduced lunch was 32.86%, report an average percentile rank of 57 in language. (See p. 11.) Although the comparative and current data are from differently normed tests, there is no evidence of a significant decline in average proficiency from 1985-1995.

Year	Language
1985	57

In 1995-96, the percent of students qualifying for free/reduced lunch was 38.37%. The data continue to reinforce that what remains constant over time is teachers' expertise and experience and their commitment to students' needs.

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Middle School Reading

Grade Level Mastery, Grades 6 and 7

Middle school reading teachers instruct students from a range of reading materials at different levels of complexity; however, students are tested on grade level. The data below represent the percent of students correctly responding at ≥70% at their grade levels. Fifth grade data are included for comparison purposes.

	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7
1992-93	70.7	75.6	74.4
1993-94	67.1	75.6	73.2
1994-95	68.6	76.1	73.8
1995-96	67.8	77.0	70.7

The percent of students correctly responding at ≥70% at grade level increases significantly from fifth to sixth grades and declines slightly from sixth to seventh grades.

Disaggregated Grade Level Mastery, Grades 6 and 7
Males/Females and Minority/Non-Minority

The data below are disaggregated comparing all students tested with males/females and minority/non-minority students. In grades 6 and 7, the percent of minority students correctly responding at ≥70% is 19% less than non-minority students.

1995-96	% ≥70% All Students	% ≥70% All Females	% ≥70% All Males	% ≥70% All Minority	% ≥70% All Non-minority
Grade 6 # Tested	78.5 1696	79.7 882	77.1 814	63.9 382	82.7 1314
Grade 7 # Tested	70.0 1459	72.3 757	67.5 702	53.5 318	74.6 1141

Disaggregated Grade Level Mastery, Grades 6 and 7
Free/Reduced and Non-Free/Reduced

The data below are disaggregated comparing free/reduced qualifying students with those who do not. In grades 6 and 7, the percents of free/reduced qualifying students correctly responding at ≥ 70% are 22% and 20% less than non-qualifying students.

1994-95	% ≥70% Free or Reduced	% ≥70% Non-Free or Reduced
Grade 6 # Tested	62.6 789	84.9 1207
Grade 7 # Tested	61.7 686	81.0 1153

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ITBS Reading: Middle School Cohort Growth
Average Percentile Ranks (National Student Norms)

	Vocabulary	Comprehension	Reading Total
Grade 6 (93-94)	51	55	54
Grade 7 (94-95)	50	54	53
Grade 6 (94-95)	48	54	52
Grade 7 (95-96)	50	56	54

Comparative 7th grade data from 1985-86, when the percent of students qualifying for free/reduced lunch was 32.86%, reports average percentile ranks of 55 in vocabulary and 50 in reading comprehension. (See p. 11.) Although the comparative and current data are from differently normed tests, there is no evidence of a significant decline in average proficiency from 1985-1995.

Year	Vocabulary	Reading Comprehension
1985	55	50

In 1995-96, the percent of students qualifying for free/reduced lunch was 38.37%. Again, what remains constant over time is teachers' expertise and experience and their commitment to students' needs.

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Progress Toward Future Planning Needs Identified in 1992-93

1. *Enhance the instruction of emerging and developing readers and writers by utilizing current research, exemplary instructional practice, and materials/methods from the Reading Recovery program.*

   Natural language readers were recommended to the Board, approved, and provided to K, 1, and 2 teachers from the following budgets.

• 1993-94	Supplementary Reading	$25,000
• 1993-94	Spelling Consumables	$9,310
• 1994-95	Spelling Consumables	$44,001

   The supervisor co-planned and provided district in-service for K-2 teachers (funded by the Elementary Department) and building-based in-service from 1992-97. (See Supervisor Activity, pp. 21-22.)

2. *Differentiate instruction for developing and independent readers and writers in heterogeneous settings by utilizing current research and exemplary practice in strategic reading, writing across the curriculum, and flexible grouping*

   The supervisor has provided on-going in-service and staff development opportunities for teachers from 1992-97. (See Supervisor Activity, pp. 21-22 and Iowa Writing Project, pp. 22-23.)

3. *Expand the use of performance assessment tools to provide a broader picture of student progress.*

   The supervisor coordinated committee efforts to revise assessment practices. She also supported waiver requests by 6 schools to use performance assessments. (See History of Reading/K-5 Language Arts Instruction in the Des Moines Public Schools 1859-1997).

4. *Make technology accessible to teachers and students as a tool for instruction and learning.*

   One instructional materials adoption and one recommended adoption include integrated curriculum technology. The supervisor serves on the Curriculum Technology Subcommittee, participating in the formulation of guidelines for technology use.

Costs vs. Benefits

The resources described in the input section (the instructional staff, the time allotted to reading/language arts, curriculum materials, central office staff, federal funding of the RIF program, and curriculum development) contribute to the quality educational program in the district.

Teachers direct instruction to the appropriate developmental or independent learning level of the student. They use flexible grouping practices both to direct attention to students' needs and to provide opportunities for students to grow. They differentiate instruction in heterogeneous settings, permitting students to learn from their peers and to work toward individual goals. They continue to use the time allotted to reading/language arts to support students' literacy growth. They work on curriculum development and materials selection committees to revise and select curriculum to meet student need.

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Curriculum materials, studied and selected by committees composed of teachers, administrators, and community members, provide appropriate and flexible tools for instruction.

The funding of the RIF program, federal (75%), local (25%), provides three books of their choice to over 10,000 students. When students choose books that can be added to their personal libraries, they are likely to value and read them.

Multiple-choice testing must be balanced by demonstrations of students' reading and writing. Assessment tools that mirror instruction and learning permit students to display a fuller range of their progress.

Because staff development funds have been distributed to buildings, teachers and principals can purchase in-service opportunities that meet their professional and building goals. It is the task of the supervisor to identify those goals and provide or facilitate appropriate in-service.

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Future Planning

The following needs, listed in order of priority, will guide the direction of the Reading/K-5 Language Arts program.

1. The supervisor will continue to identify assessment practices and instructional methods that address the needs of young children entering our literacy program. Children whose experience with print is limited need intensive support compared with those who, according to some reading researchers, have had over 1,000 hours of active reading and writing experiences before they enter school.

2. The state of Iowa and the Des Moines Schools take pride in the quality of instruction provided by well-prepared teachers. The U.S. National Commission on Teaching and America's Future reports that "studies have found that teacher expertise is the single most important factor in determining student achievement and that fully trained teachers are far more effective with students than those who are not prepared."

   The supervisor will:

   - continue to support and encourage site-based in-service and staff development that utilizes teacher expertise and is directed toward building improvement plans
   - continue to utilize district funding sources, i.e., the Phase III Effective Schools structure, to provide staff development that supports instructional materials adoptions.
   - continue to co-plan/facilitate the Drake Summer Literacy Institutes
   - seek additional funding sources, for teacher professional growth, i.e. Eisenhower funding.

3. National trends to mainstream special education students have produced a high level of concern for identified students' reading proficiency. Nationally and in our district, students served in Special Education have reading as their area of primary need. The supervisor will work with the Special Education Program to

   - identify a wide range of material through the elementary instructional materials adoption
   - identify and support special education teachers' needs for professional growth in reading instruction.

4. The supervisor will implement the recommendations of the Curriculum Management Task Forces. The following recommendations from the Curriculum Management Audit (August, 1966) are likely to guide the supervisor's leadership:

   - articulate the congruence among the written, taught, and tested curriculum
   - monitor the integration of technology into the curriculum
   - provide direction and support to teachers as they conduct frequent diagnoses of student instructional needs
   - provide direction and support to principals as they monitor instructional delivery and curriculum implementation
   - provide guidance to principals in interpreting test results
   - allign resources (human curriculum, time) with the challenges that diversity and poverty introduce
   - continue support for district and school missions

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- develop effective curriculum guides through broad-based committees in a spirit of shared decison-making
- seek support for a quality staff development program for teachers and administrators that supports curriculum adoption.

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